

# Responses to Grief

Grief is a strong emotion caused by a loss. This loss can include losing a person, a thing, an experience, a job, loss of social connections, or even loss of routines before COVID-19. Everyone experiences grief differently.

This resource describes common examples of ways people react to grief. You might recognize some of these reactions in yourself or your loved ones.

## Disbelief and Denial

When experiencing a loss, it's normal to have a hard time believing it, especially right after it happens. COVID-19 adds another layer to this due to how unexpected and unprecedented this pandemic has been. People might "forget" that the traumatic experience happened. Some people might deny the event ever happened.

## Sadness

One of the most recognized signs of grief is sadness. People can appear down, depressed, or unmotivated. When someone is experiencing grief, it may seem they are often crying for no reason.



## Anger

When people are grieving, the anger may be misplaced to other people, loved ones, doctors, the government, blaming others for what happened. The anger could be about the fact that the event happened. People can also be angry at a person who passed away. People who experience grief can have changes in their mood without an apparent reason.

## Guilt

Another common reaction is guilt. People may feel a great deal of responsibility often over events they have no control. Some examples include feeling bad about an argument that never got resolved, or people may feel like they didn't spend enough time with the loved one while they were alive.

## Anxiety

The loss may have you feeling uncertain and frightened about the future. You may notice your heart racing, your heart beating faster than normal, or feeling as if you can't keep up with your thoughts. These are all signs of anxiety and are normal responses to grief.

## Physical Changes

You may notice less energy or motivation to do things. Trouble sleeping or a loss of appetite is also common. People may feel more pain in their body than they typically do. It's common to have these experiences following a loss.